



## The Princeton Club of Rochester

**Eman Muthana**  
**Senior, World of Inquiry School**

Fear and ignorance are too often the driving forces behind discrimination and hate. In the Muslim community and across the Rochester region, Eman is bridging racial, ethnic and cultural relations through education.

Eman began highlighting World Hijab Day three years ago at World of Inquiry, and this year, she brought the event to the entire Rochester City School District and beyond. Due to her work, over 20 schools in the area are now participating in the annual event, where students, faculty and others of all backgrounds are encouraged to wear the traditional Muslim headscarf.

*“It is a difficult time to be a Muslim in the United States. Muslim girls are easy targets of racism and stereotypes because their headscarves are an obvious symbol of their faith, which has been portrayed in such a negative manner. People often define us before they know who we really are. I wanted to dispel the terrorist stereotype and show Americans that the hijab is a proud cultural symbol.”*

These events have accomplished all that and more. Not only did they foster communication between students, but Eman says fellow classmates also found their own voices as activists.

*“Thousands of people wore the scarf for each of the events, creating a peaceful and open environment for discussion. It allowed women to feel what it is like to walk in our shoes. World Hijab Day not only created understanding, but representatives were able to educate the community.”*

World of Inquiry Teacher Kelly LaLonde describes how Eman took the lead to champion for diversity sensitivity in what is a politically divisive America for the Muslim community:

*“I fully believe that Eman has brought an awareness and tolerance to the Muslim students in our schools that would not be there, had she not organized this event. With our current political climate, Eman could have chosen to fade into the background, to wait for the storm to blow over. Instead she continues to use education as the greatest weapon against hatred. She is the spark that lit the fire of this movement.”*

LaLonde says that Eman has grown immensely in this leadership role:

*“It is the teacher’s burden that our students become greater than we are. I am at once saddened and elated to know that this moment has come for Eman and I. It has been my great honor to know Eman. It is with the utmost conviction that I nominate her for this award.”*

Eman, we are deeply impressed by your positivity, vision, courage, tenacity and ongoing leadership! Congratulations!